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LEITCHVILLE AREA FLAP

(Compiled from reports by investigator Paul Norman and newspaper items)

Over the past few months there have been a number of incidents in the Leitchville - Cohuna area which may perhaps constitute a flap equal to that of the Victorian Easter flap of 1966. Several mysterious markings have been discovered, two of which appeared either below the UFO when seen, or at the spot where the object touched down. On Sunday Dec. 4, a burned ring 14" wide with a circumference of 26 feet was found in a paddock belonging to Mr. Thomas Church, about 5 miles S.W. of Leitchville. Initial analysis of the soil taken showed that it was not radioactive. One team, consisting of a scientist and technician, has made a further test, showing that the ring was caused by an electrical burn. Further tests have been delayed due to the holiday period. One of the most spectacular of the visual observations was a "satellite object" case on Dec. 13 - 14, in which at least 12 people came forward to explain various stages of the operation. A description of this incident, published in "Australasian Post" for 9/2/1978 is basically correct, but is in error with respect to a few minor details.

Reports from the area are still currently being investigated, but some of the information available to date follows:

Sep. 30 About 2 a.m. Mr. D. Fehring and his wife Helen, of Leitchville, were awakened by an explosion, and a bluish light was briefly seen. He later discovered that his brother had seen a light travelling west to east between Pyramid Hill and Mount Hope at about 5 a.m. the same day. He also later learned that two witnesses had seen a blue light that appeared to land near Mr. Fehring's home. Several days later, one of the "circles" was discovered in a nearby paddock.

Nov. 18 At 10.30 p.m. Mrs. Vivien Mather and her husband, of Fernhurst, near Boort, saw a stationary orange-yellowish light in the sky above the Marong-Bridgewater road. She said the light was about a fifth the size of the full moon and was glowing. "We were going as fast as we could to reach it but it suddenly went out like a globe", she said. She said the light pulsed for about five minutes, and just before it went out became dim and turned red. She said her husband, Peter, a member of the Astronomical Society of Victoria, confirmed that the light source was not a planet or other heavenly body.

Nov. 30 Mr. Ian Bartels was at his home in Pyramid Hill in the evening, talking to friends on CB radio, when his transceiver experienced noisy interference then cut out. At the same time, about 10 p.m., two of Mr. Bartel's friends were in the Mologa Forest where they observed a circular pulsating white light over Pyramid Hill. About the size of the moon, the object was at an elevation of about 10 degrees in the north west, and was observed for a total duration of about 3½ hours. One of the witnesses, Mr. I. McIntosh of Pyramid Hill, thought that the object was 150-300 feet off the ground: "We watched the object hover over town, then it started to move from side to side of the town in the same line; first at slow speed and dim light, then the light grew brighter and the light began to move faster. It moved at a speed where we could see it start and then it would seem to jump faster than the eye could follow".

Dec 4 At 9.30 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4, dairy farmer Mr. Tom Church discovered a burnt circular patch in a paddock about 1.2 km from his house. The ring, 38 cm thick and 8 metres diameter, was not there at 6 p.m. the previous day when he went through the paddock. The circle was clearly defined and there was no burnt area outside the ring. Samples from the ring were examined in Melbourne and it was concluded that the ring was not due to fungus, as some had suggested, but had been caused by some form of electrical discharge. The inconsistency of the burn marks inside the distinct circle indicated that the greener blades of grass had acted as the best conductors for the electrical discharge. Other tests have so far proved that no chemicals had caused the ring. The circular patch on Mr. Church's property is not the first to be discovered in the area. At least two others have been found in paddocks in the previous two months - one with a 12 metre diameter on Mr. Lloyd Naylor's property a km away, and another, five metres in width, on a farm belonging to Mr. Gil Pickering, 16 km away. Mr. Pickering had discovered the circle about 6 weeks earlier and had taken colour photographs showing a distinctive burnt patch imprinted onto green grass.

On the night of Dec 4, Mr. Bartels again experienced CB radio interference as he drove towards Pyramid Hill. Mr. Bartels, who is an electrical mechanic, said: "As I drove towards the hill a hissing noise started on my CB radio. The signal got stronger and reached maximum strength at a very high frequency. I was wiped off the air and couldn't make contact with people only a quarter of a mile away. By the time the others got there it had died down". He then drove to another hill and the CB set noise once again built up a crescendo. He said he was the only CB radio user to pick up the high-pitched signals. "A fortnight later the same hissing noise occurred and built up to a crescendo for 30 seconds".

Dec 8. Mrs. A. Brewer, of Leitchville, made an observation at 11.15 p.m. in Cohuna: "I noticed a bright red light with a vivid silver-white flashing type light appear in the sky. I looked south and watched the light for about one minute before I finally mentioned it to others in the group; they started to watch with me. It was moving rather quickly as if coming towards us, then it circled towards the east and then back to the position in which I had first seen it. It then seemed to be coming down, then it just stopped and was stationary and visible for about 3 - 5 minutes with the flashing still going. Then, before our eyes, it just disappeared as if it was never there."

"I also noticed that about 20 to 30 minutes before I first noticed the light, there was a sudden gust of wind from a north westerly direction as if a cool change was taking place. It eased off to a gentle breeze for a short spell, then it was quite calm and cool. Earlier that night I heard and saw an aeroplane flying over from north on a south easterly path. But there was no noise at all while the light was visible, or after its disappearance. I would roughly estimate the size of the light at a large dinner plate and to be at a distance of 15 miles southerly..."

Dec 13. Tom Church and his wife were driving home after visiting friends at 11.30 p.m. when they saw an orange-red object about the size of the moon slowly descending. Mrs. Church contacted friends by phone and a group of people assembled near the Church's cowshed to watch. When first seen, the object was at an elevation of approximately 45 degrees and descended slowly in a southerly direction until it became stationary at almost ground level. After the object stopped, within a period of about 5 minutes three smaller object detached themselves. Object 1 travelled south, following Bullock Creek, and stopped between Pyramid Hill and Mount Hope, covering an estimated 25 km in two minutes. Object 2 flew south, then zigzagged and appeared to be "hedge-hopping" at ground level. Then the light brightened and it shot up to an elevation of about 45 degrees where it changed in appearance from circular to an arrow shape with the point upwards, after which it descended again. Object 3 travelled south and stopped halfway between the parent object and object 2, where it remained stationary. When the four objects were positioned, they all started to change colour rapidly - from orange to bright red to bluish green to whitish blue, as if signalling to one another. Object 2 seemed to be the only active member of the formation after the object had reached their positions, apart from the "signalling". During the entire period of the observation "meteors" were falling frequently in the area between the large object and object 1. These resembled orange lights which burned up after three to five seconds. Some curved upwards before burning out. At about 2 a.m. a sudden blast of wind at about 15 mph from the SE for five minutes, made it cold. By 4 a.m. the witnesses had become disappointed because they expected the smaller objects to return to the parent object, together with the fact that they had work to do that day and needed sleep. In addition, the objects had become less active, with only a flash now and again, although the "meteors" were still falling at a rate of 12 to 15 per hour. The last witness, Mrs. Church, went to bed at 5 a.m.

OTHER VICTORIAN PRESS REPORTS

Latrobe Valley Express, Morwell, 28/10/77: ...At about 7.40 p.m. on Monday, three Moe youths were on their way home walking along Service Rd., near the Edward Hunter Reserve. It was a calm night and visibility was clear. One of the trio, Lance Baldwin, 14, of King St., Moe, tells the story: "We saw this light in the sky. We thought it might have been a shooting star but it was coming down and getting bigger and bigger. It was coming down fast and it stopped dead a short distance off the ground above the Edward Hunter Reserve. Then what seemed to be landing gear came out from the bottom of what was an oval shaped, very bright white light. This landing gear - poles with a bubbly ball on the end - spun around the object and then it started to go down. We lost sight of it in the trees. We ran up to where we thought would be the spot it had landed but, as we were getting near, we saw something shoot off into the sky".

Lance's father, Reg. Baldwin, is certain that what his son and his two mates, Danny Graham, 14, of Margaret St., and Andrew Nieuwenhuys, 15, of Caldwell St., saw, was a UFO. Mr. Baldwin has questioned each of the boys separately and each has given him a sketch of what they saw. Although the sketches were not exactly the same, they were similar. "I know the boys are telling the truth. Something scared these boys and it ties in with the sighting 18 months ago in the same area..."

Knox & Mountain District Free Press, 1/11/77: ...Last Wednesday night at 8 p.m. Mrs. June Whittacker and her three children were walking down Mills Rd. to their home. "The moon was full and bright and we were looking at it", she said. "Suddenly there was this brilliant white disc moving across towards Emerald. It was brighter than the moon", she said.

Mrs. Whittacker called her neighbours who also stood and watched the object for some minutes. "It wasn't an aircraft as it didn't have the usual flashing red and green light. Also it was a solid disc of light", she said.

Mrs. Whittacker said the object moved slowly towards the ranges. "There was no sound at all", she said...

Ballarat Courier, 29/12/77: A Creswick family are baffled by a strange mark in their paddock. Mrs. Mick Porter, of Slaty Creek Rd., found a ring of dead grass in a paddock at the rear of her home on Monday morning. The ring is about three metres wide. Mrs. Porter has not cancelled out the possibility that it may have been caused by a UFO.

She said on Sunday night her grandsons, Michael, 14, and John, 15, had seen a light in the sky. They had thought it was an aeroplane. Mrs. Porter said on Monday about 3.30 a.m. her younger grandson, Robert, 6, had woken her husband. Robert said he heard a noise. Mr. Porter had told him to go back to sleep. "I told him it was only the wind", Mr. Porter said.

Robert said he had heard a "big wind and a sound like hailstones". Mr. Porter said he had heard a sound, but that it was hard to describe it exactly. He said he had felt something bump the house. He said the ring was "uncanny".

Mrs. Porter said she walked across the paddock every day to get her cow. Never before had she seen the ring. "I just stood there dumbfounded when I saw it. I wondered what would have done it. We searched the paddocks for others but didn't find any. The cow hasn't gone near it", Mrs. Porter said....

(Samples were taken from the site, but after rain had fallen, and tests proved fruitless.)

Bendigo Advertiser, 20/2/78: ...Don Pickens, 20, was returning to his parents' home at Lockington about 10.30 p.m. on Wednesday night after attending classes at the Echuca Technical School when he saw many flashing lights near Bamawm Extension. He wondered what they were and decided to investigate when he reached the Extension Recreation Reserve. Turning left into the Lockington Road, he was suddenly confronted by "a pillar of glowing light".

His father, Mr. Alf Pickens, said his son told him the light was a brilliant white like an electric light pole but situated right in the middle of the road. "Don had to brake to stop the car from running into it", Mr. Pickens said. "His curiosity got the better of him and he started the car slowly towards the light - but as the car approached the light moved away", he said. "As Don accelerated the light would accelerate. Suddenly Don thought his car headlight might be playing tricks on his eyes, so he turned the car lights off. Everything in the area was lit up as bright as day", Mr. Pickens said. Don traced the light for about 8 km around the country roads, but finally as it approached Kotta the light turned green and faded away.

Meanwhile, a dairy farmer's wife was terrified after an incident on Thursday night in the same area. Mrs. Barbara Coombs, 32, had been playing cards at a friend's place at Lockington when she decided to go home about 10.30 p.m. About 2 km from the town she suddenly saw "blue and red" flashing lights on the road about one km ahead of her. "At first I thought it was an accident, but suddenly remembered the reports of the night before", she said. She quickly turned the car around and as she did so the flashing lights stopped. She quickly drove back into Lockington and telephoned her husband, who came to pick her up. Mr. Barry Coombs said he saw nothing along the road on his way into town to pick up his wife and again saw nothing on the way home.

Bendigo Advertiser, 21/2/78: A UFO researcher is convinced that the mysterious beam of light sighted near Lockington last week came from an overhead UFO. The researcher, Mr. Paul Norman, of Melbourne, cancelled appointments and headed towards Echuca to investigate the sighting as soon as he heard about it. He interviewed the youth, Don Pickens, 20, of Lockington, who claimed that he had nearly crashed his car into a brilliant pillar of light which was situated in the middle of the road near the Bamawm Extension Recreation Reserve. Mr. Pickens said he couldn't see the top of the light because of his car roof. Mr. Norman was accompanied by another UFO researcher, Mr. Pat Gildea, 46, who brought a large amount of testing equipment. Mr. Gildea said yesterday that he has found no indication of radioactivity in the area. Further tests will continue this week.

Meanwhile, two more sightings have been reported. A farmer, Mr. Noel Peace, of Leitchville, told Mr. Norman that he had seen about 50 lights forming a horseshoe pattern in the sky on Feb. 10. "The lights were about the size of light globes and appeared to be about one mile away", Mr. Peace said. "They were placed at a 35 degree angle in a northerly direction from where I stood", he said. Mr. Norman said this observation was similar to a sighting in America some years ago known as the "Lubbock Lights". "There were two rows of lights forming the horseshoe", Mr. Peace said.

Castlemaine Mail, 22/2/78: Mr. Les Leathbridge was one of a number of residents who saw flying objects over Newstead last Friday night and again on Sunday night. He is pictured on a property north of Newstead where four circles can be clearly seen on the grass, the biggest measures 26 paces across and the smaller ones 16. They are unlike those found at Leitchville recently, which were a mark of about a metre wide in a circle. Two of the marks were found about two and a half weeks ago and another two a week later.

Investigators of UFOs, Messrs. Paul Norman and Pat Gildea came up from the city to investigate them yesterday and said they both believed the marks to be genuine. Sceptics in the past had thought such marks could be made by sulphophosphate, but the last lot of super on the property was applied over a year ago - before the rains. They said they had seen similar marks on a property last year at Mildura.

On Friday night the Leathbridge family had interference trouble with their TV set, and a puzzled Mr. Leathbridge went outside to investigate, as he lives away from the main road. It was a clear night and he thought he heard a "humming sound", looking around he could see nothing until looking skywards when he saw three flashing lights travelling together, moving very fast in a zig-zag across the sky. It came from Creswick to Maryborough direction and was going north. The time was about from between 9 o'clock to quarter to eleven.

On Sunday night the Leathbridges were visiting relatives, the Camerons, when their daughter Grace and boyfriend Brian Smith stayed outise looking for UFOs after the Friday night experience, came rushing into the house with the announcement there was another in the sky. This was about nine o'clock at night. Mr. Leathbridge and his wife Ethel jumped in the car with them and they followed the object which had a similar lighting, but these were in a "traffic light" formation.

The party followed the lights up the Maldon road for about 6 km as it seemed not to be travelling all that fast, and it seemed down low. The actual height of it was hard to judge, but Grace Leathbridge said it could have been as low as 300 metres, as it was not far off the tree height. They were not gaining on the object and it appeared to be fading, so they turned back towards Newstead. Much to their amazement, the thing seemed to be coming back with them. It then appeared to come down to the north after tree level north of Newstead. In all, the second sighting extended over two hours....

Echuca Herald, 24/2/78: ...Echuca man, Mr. Ray White, 37, of Metheson's Road, told the Riverine Herald of a "scary" experience in Ogilvie Ave. late yesterday afternoon. Mr. White first saw a brilliant flash while driving slowly west in Ogilvie Ave. At first he thought it was a plane, but then noticed that the object had a limited fuselage with a black section underneath. Mr. White said he watched it for at least 10 seconds before he looked away, but when he looked back only seconds later it was gone. Curious as to what he had seen, Mr. White stopped quickly to check if he had seen a plane. There was nothing in the sky. "I searched everywhere in the sky, but there was nothing there - there was no way it was a plane", Mr. White said....

INTERSTATE REPORTS

April 18, 1977, 0430 hrs: Witness was driving his truck at Laurieton, near Port Macquarie, N.S.W., and upon stopping and getting out of his truck, he noticed a white light ascending over a sand dune 150 yards away. He stood there quite frightened for a while, watching the object move across the top of the dunes coming towards him. When the object was about 30 yards from him he ran towards his truck and the object stopped momentarily, then moved back towards the beach, where it descended over the dunes. The witness stood up onto the cab of his truck, where he saw the object travelling with increasing speed out to sea a few feet over the water. The object illuminated the water. At about one mile in a S.E. direction, the object climbed very rapidly and 30 seconds later it was about as bright as an average star. One minute later the object had disappeared in the S direction. The object was estimated to be 50 feet in diameter, bright white, with no openings. (investigation by K. Blackman - ACOS Bulletin, Dec. 77)

May 26, 1977, about midnight: On a farming property about 11 km east of Orange, N.S.W., Mrs. H. was in bed reading a book, when she heard a dog barking and a corralled horse whinnying and stomping around its enclosure in a most agitated manner. Thinking some stray animal or dog had wandered into the area, she was about to get up to investigate when her 16 year old son rushed into her bedroom. He was obviously in a very agitated and panicky state, and exclaimed: "Mum, I've seen it!" Thinking he had observed the cause of the animal disturbance she said, "What, a big dog?" "No, a great big light!"

He then described how he, too, had heard the agitation of the horse and the dog and had looked directly out his bedroom door. Some 90 metres away in an approximately N.W. direction from the house, he saw a very bright light complex, either on or near the ground. The light source consisted of about 4 bright white lights in a row. The whole thing seemed to slowly increase in brilliance, then upon reaching a brilliant intensity, began to wane in brightness, taking on an orange-red hue just before the illumination was extinguished.

It was at this point that the boy ran in to alert his mother. She immediately went with him to his bedroom, but could not see anything in the darkness on the hillside. Mrs. H. went through the house to the front door, from where she was surprised to see that a paddock across the road running in front of their property was brightly illuminated by an apparent monochromatic white light source. Mrs. H. then moved over to a nearby fence, and from there she could make out the apparent source of the illumination. In about a N.N.W. direction, she made out a bright elongated rectangular object which appeared to have about four "square windows" along its side. This whole complex appeared to move slowly over and around the crest of the hill. Mrs. H. ran back inside the house and returned to the fence with her son. All that could be seen now was a bright glow in the same area, but this, too, eventually disappeared.

Collaborative incidences include the noise, disturbance, noise over neighbouring properties, animal disturbances on other properties, and at least two independent sightings of UFOs at the same time by local factory shift workers.

When morning came, Mrs. H's son went up to the area where he saw the light source on or near the ground. He was looking for shell cartridges (to confirm the unlikely spotlights hypothesis) or burn marks. He found nothing of this nature, and school attendance then required him to give up any further inspection. Later that same morning his mother went up to the spot and started to make a more detailed inspection. She found two unusual indentations, which consisted of circular areas denuded of grass, with a covering of very finely graduated soil. Mrs. H. gave up looking any further because of the bitter cold, but she told a friend of the family, who in turn informed UFO Research, NSW, of the incident. We contacted Terry Bishop, our representative in Orange, immediately. During the intervening period it had rained and snowed. Because of this the traces had deteriorated in condition, but were still clearly visible. T. Bishop made a preliminary field inspection and confirmed that there were in fact four indentations of the type pointed out to him by Mrs. H. They were all about 5 cm. in diameter and arranged in a trapezoid shape. There were no other apparent effects at the grassed site, both inside and outside the imprint area. The length of the trapezoid's sides were 5.3, 10.1, 4.3, and 5.8 metres. The investigators were of the collective opinion that the witnesses were truthful and described the details of the event they witnessed to the best of their ability.

It is of particular interest that both percipients reported after image effects which reflects the brilliant nature of the light source observed. The boy described only an after image effect which he felt was normal after exposure to the unknown light source, while his mother described seeing black squares before her eyes when she went indoors. Apart from spectroscopic analyses (which revealed nothing untoward) the soil samples from the site (both imprint and control samples) were also subjected to inspection via the thermoluminescence process by Dr. G. Stevens...

...In the case of the Orange site, superphosphate had been spread about a week previous to the event in question, thereby supplying a natural reference for disimetry. It was found that if any ionizing radiation was involved, the ground would have received less than 100 rad, and that any heating involved in forming the cleared patches would have been below 205 deg. C....

...Perhaps the Orange case was not a landing as such, but instead four remote sampling devices which were extended from the object proper, which would have hovered just above the ground. It would appear that the object's tenure was quite short, and if a landing had taken place (with the irregular non-symmetrical arrangements of the prints being due to the sloping site) then this factor may have been responsible for the lack of a more remarkable trace (say as compared to the Penrith trace case of April, 1976) (UFO Newsletter, UFO Research, NSW, Nov., 1977)

June 22, 1977 (From the Brisbane Sunday Sun, 8/1/1978) At about 11 p.m. on June 22 last year, gold prospector Albert Smith noticed three lights in the sky. Silently and slowly they moved down towards him and then nestled in a clump of trees near his camp. He saw figures emerge amid dazzling lights.

Thus began the most incredible two days in the life of 47 year old Albert - the two days in which he claims he was visited by people from another world at his lonely camp on the Bulloo River in far SW of Queensland. Smith is not Albert's real name. But that's what we said we would call him when he agreed reluctantly to an interview last week. He claims he spoke to the visitors, watched them play games with what appeared to be lightning balls, saw them disappear and then reappear and stood spellbound as the intergalactic travellers created instantaneous rain.

Last week Albert recalled his meeting with the 35 men and women from a place they called Begua. He said: "It was in near freezing weather yet the women were wearing summer-type clothing. The men were dressed in what looked like grey businessmen's suits. They all appeared very human but their skin was blue-grey colour. Their craft were about 50 m. high, each with 5 supporting legs. The leader said his name was Behnar. When I touched him it felt like I was touching very soft rubber. When I asked them questions they seemed to know what I was going to say before I said it. And I think they only permitted me to ask what they wanted me to. I'm sure they had control of my mind for those two days. I think their powers were almost limitless".

Albert said the aliens could speak English, but only in whispered tones. "They appeared to be able to communicate with their hands as well. Only a few of them stayed near the camp. The rest went down to the river. One woman told me she was 490 years old. She looked it, too; like a mummy from some sort of Egyptian tomb. At one stage they all started to play a game with hundreds of these balls which seemed to throw out lightning. These people could leap 60 metres in one jump. When they left, the only thing that remained was a very heavy smell of Kerosene. There were no marks or objects left to prove their existence. Just before they finally disappeared the leader told me he was going to make rain. A short time later it suddenly started to pour. It was eight days before the rain stopped. I wanted to see their craft taking off but again I think they controlled me. I was lying in bed and could not get up. It seemed like I had 200 kgm of lead in my legs".

The June visit was the fourth experience Albert has had with visitors from outer space since he began prospecting in the area five years ago. In the winter of 1973 he saw a fleet of 16 spacecraft hover over the area and then move away. In May the following year he approached a cigar shaped craft hovering above the ground. He saw men in the cockpit and a woman at one of the windows. It sped away in what appeared to be a flash of light. And in June, 1976 another brilliantly illuminated craft appeared.

Albert said: "I have not yet approached the authorities about this. A lot of other things happened which I don't want to talk about at this stage. No one will believe me until I get proof and that's what I intend to get as soon as I possibly can. I will be going back to the area in late February but this time I will have a camera. I have begun to document all these experiences. I am very scared and frightened about going back but they did not harm me the first time. I hope they won't if they visit me again".

July 5, 1977, 6.05 p.m., Bald Hills, Qld: Mrs. B.P. and her mother, Mrs. L.B. of Burpengary, were driving along the North Coast Freeway towards Brisbane in order to attend night classes. Suddenly her mother called her attention to an object on the left side (east) which appeared to be about the size of a large star that was growing larger.

Observing the glowing object through the window, they watched it grow to the size of a full moon, only the light was white. The intense light continued to approach, growing larger all the time. Mrs. B.P. thought it odd that the light, even though it was very bright, did not throw a beam. She believed that the object had turned around by about 45 degrees as they could see that the light was not the object itself but was situated in the middle of a very dark and much larger object, that had the appearance of an airliner (cigar shaped).

Slowing the car down, they saw that the object was above some tall trees and appeared to be pacing them, changing height with an up and down motion as if it were avoiding the top of a tree. Suddenly the spindle-shaped object increased speed and headed north west. Mrs. B.P. and her mother, watching it move away, could see the light coming from what appeared to be enormous windows in the side of the craft.

This excellent sighting was made approximately one mile north of the ABC broadcasting tower at Bald Hills. Apparently there was no other traffic in the area at the time. (UFO Research, Qld. newsletter, Aug-Sep., 1977)

Oct. 12, 1977, (From the Parkes Post, NSW, 31/10/1977): Two Parkes men - operating a goods train between Parkes and Bathurst - observed an unidentified flying object on the outskirts of Molong on the night of Wednesday, Oct. 12. The men, Nick Callill and Eric Hagen, were working as fireman and driver on the train which left Parkes earlier the same night. Nick Callill, a resident of Wentworth St., Parkes, told the Champion Post on Friday that the train was running about one mile west of Molong and about to enter some hilly country when he made the sighting.

"There was a clearing north of the railway line and a large bright object was coming in to land - using a gradual descent flight path - as the train went past the area", he said. The Parkes man said they observed the object for about 30 seconds. "If asked to describe it, I would say it looked like a silver orange - with square windows all around the circumference. Light from the object was not glowing or pulsing - it was just a plain, very bright white light", he added...

Mid-Oct., 1977 (from the Cessnock Advertiser, NSW, 2/11/1977): ...Mrs. Rachel Hendry of Aberdare noticed the mysterious object about 9 p.m. two weeks ago but was reluctant to report it for fear of ridicule. She decided to come forward and report her eerie experience after reading press reports about several UFO sightings in W.A. recently.

Mrs. H. said she had walked out onto her front verandah and when she glanced skywards, "there it was". It was hovering in the Northcote Street area and was not much higher than the TV antennas, she said. "It was fascinating at first but when it went away I had an eerie feeling. It hovered for about a minute and went off at a high speed towards Mount View".

Mrs. Hendry is convinced the object was hovering and was not an aeroplane or a helicopter. She said it had two fluorescent type lights, one bright red and the other gold. The lights were so bright she couldn't see the outline to determine its shape or size. "I could hear a humming noise but it was not a loud noise....".

Jan. 10, 1978 (from the Armidale Express, 30/1/1978): Melbourne man, 25 year old Gary Price said he was travelling from Grafton to Armidale (NSW) on Jan. 10 this year when he saw bright lights in a paddock adjacent to the Baker's Creek, east of Armidale. He said he left his car and entered the paddock, and at first thought he had come across a poultry farm, but then the lights moved!

Mr. Price said he had a camera in his car, but the photos he took three hours trying to get did not turn out. He said what he saw was hovering in a very thick mist, was as big as a house, and had square windows all around.

"I think the only way to describe it is if you asked someone to draw a flying saucer and that would be it", he said. "It had a large light on the top that I remember very clearly, because when it was moving along in the mist that was all of it you could see."

Mr. Price said he had first seen the alleged UFO from the road when it was on a hill above him, and then started moving across the paddock. "Once I got into the paddock it started to move towards me and I made for the road, and a car, a light green Cortina station wagon towing a trailer, came toward me", he said. "I tried to stop him, but he went past, but he must have seen the thing because he went past again and then tore off toward Armidale. It was only about 600 metres away from me when I saw it", he said. "I didn't report it at the time because I was hoping the photos would turn out. I gave the film to the UFO Society to develop, but an Instamatic camera could not pick up the light at night".

...He said the thing that amazed him the most was the lack of sound associated with the UFO and a strange mist that moved around him, almost as if it were following him, and that it was the thickest mist he had ever seen.

There have been a lot of alleged UFO sightings in the past 10 years near Armidale, many of them in the Baker's Creek-Blue Hole area, as they are both in the same gorge network....

Feb. 5, 1978 (from the Gunnedah Independent, NSW, 9/2/1978): The sighting was made by Mrs. Pat Hughes, of Grey's Place. Mrs. Hughes sighted her UFO about 10.30 p.m. on Sunday. She was standing on the balcony of her home when she saw an orange light, "about the size of a bread-and-butter plate", in the direction of Kelvin.

Mrs. Hughes observed the object for roughly 10 minutes. The central orange "body" of the object had two lights at the top and bottom. Three shafts of light, equally spaced to the right hand side of the central body, radiated between the two lights. The object, according to Mrs. Hughes, appeared to rotate, growing dull and bright alternatively as the smaller lights partly obscured the large central body. Mrs. Hughes said the object then appeared to "spiral" away towards the Kelvin area after roughly 10 minutes. She estimated the UFO to be 2000 to 3000 feet from the ground at an angle of 45 degrees from her viewing spot....

Editorial, Melbourne Sunday Observer, 19 Feb., 1978:

"It's about time the State and Federal Governments took UFO sightings in this country seriously. The technical experts required to collect and analyse reported sightings and information are available in this country - particularly in the armed services.

And every week more people, lured from embarrassment and shyness by others, report strange sightings to newspapers and police.

Months ago the Sunday Observer pointed out the enormous number of sightings that were occurring.

And this week the Melbourne Herald finally had to admit that there were strange lights in the sky. It's ridiculous to ignore them anymore.

Let's get the RAAF to check the sightings and follow them up with public statements. We deserve to know what's going on!"

(We couldn't agree more with the last sentence - Ed.)

AIRLINE PILOT REPORTS SIGHTING

An airline pilot has reported a sighting which occurred over Western Australia on July 24, 1969 at about 1½ hours after sunset. The pilot reported:

On a flight from Mt. Magnet to Perth, the aircraft I was commanding was given an air traffic clearance to track to Perth via Ballidu; that is, through the Pearce Military Control Zone. About 5 to 7 miles or so NE of Pearce the other pilot with me drew my attention to what appeared to be an aircraft taking off from Pearce. We remarked that it was unusual for a civil aircraft to receive a clearance for this route when Air Force activity was in progress.

We watched the "aircraft" for several moments as it climbed and drew closer to us. It appeared as a bright light, such as an aircraft landing light, and several smaller yellow lights resembling cabin lights.

As it drew slowly closer, we were concerned that normal separation standards could not be maintained and enquired of the Perth ATC controller as to the aircraft's intentions, whereupon he informed us that there was no known traffic in our vicinity.

At this point we changed frequency to the radar controller and enquired as to traffic on radar in our area, to be told by him that no other aircraft was appearing on radar near us. I passed a derisive comment at that point to the effect that there certainly was something there and was immediately backed up by the pilot of another aircraft that was on track from Lancelin Island to Perth.

As the object was very near we took precautionary action and turned smartly to the right intending to pass behind it. I flicked on our landing lights as we turned. As we turned, the object(s) accelerated with incredible rapidity, and in the space of less than, say, five seconds, disappeared from sight.

Newspaper accounts of ground sightings appeared the following morning from places as widely separated as Perth and Albany.

The sighting lasted several minutes, and the object was first seen in the west, finally disappearing in the south east at apparently supersonic speed at an estimated 40 - 50 miles distance. The object was never more than 5 - 10 degrees above the horizon, and was estimated to be about half the diameter of the moon at its closest. Weather conditions were clear.

Witness's sketch at point of nearest approach.

OVERSEAS NEWS

Uruguayan Close Encounters

Dozens of cases of close encounters have been reported in Uruguay during the latter part of 1977. These two examples are taken from press wire services:

Montevideo (UP), 26/6/77 - Authorities are investigating a puzzling episode which occurred in the area of Trienta y Tres, in the north east part of the country, where a 13 year old youth told police that a UFO had tried to abduct him. "I held on tightly to a post and called my grandmother", Jose Denis told police, who are trying, with the help of psychologists and specialists, to reconstruct the hazy story of the boy. The supposed occurrence took place when Jose, who is a student at the industrial school of this city, was returning at night on a rural road to the house of his grandparents with whom he lives in Villa Sara, five kilometres from the urban centre. In his story to authorities, Denis said: "I saw something like little stars which were coming in a group in the shape of a whirlpool. They gave off light but no sparks, and came down to the house. I was scared and I could not move. Then I felt a force which tried to lift me up toward the light which had grown larger. I held on tightly to a post and shouted as loud as I could for help. Afterwards, I do not remember anything. When I woke up I was at home". The grandmother has been summoned to testify tomorrow since her testimony is considered to be essential to the case.

Montevideo (UPI) 8/8/77: Yesterday "El Diario" published the latest story of the appearances of UFOs in this country. It told of a farm worker, Laco Ozano, of Rocha, who reported to the authorities that he was struck by a low flying UFO, knocked him out and singed his hair. He received medical attention at the local hospital for his condition. (Reprinted from "Xenolog", Nov-Dec 77, 33 Dee St. Tamaru, NZ)

Local Man Eyes Space Ship, Sees Aliens (From the Pelham Journal, Pelham, Georgia, USA, 11/8/1977)

There is a possibility that at this very moment, members of an exploration group from a far away planet are explaining to their leader their findings on earth and describing how earth man looks. Well, it could be, according to a 63 year old retired automobile dealer living in the Bowen Trailer Park on the Vada Road near here, who has gained nationwide recognition with his vivid account of coming in contact with a space ship and its alien crew.

Tom Dawson admits that he does not expect anyone to believe his story, and he states that he doesn't blame them, because he wouldn't believe it either had he not seen it with his own eyes. Mr. Dawson, a former Lakeland, Flor. resident, talked to a Journal reporter, and carried him to the spot where the "thing" landed and declared that he is aware that everyone thinks him either crazy or drunk. "I don't care what they say. This is the honest truth. I'm not crazy, I wasn't drinking, and I've never had a mental condition. This is the very first time I have ever experienced anything like this".

Mr. Dawson, who still showed signs of excitement several days after the incident happened, continued to talk. "My mind was alert all of the time the ordeal was going on. I don't blame people for saying I'm nuts. I've heard similar stories myself, and I've said the same thing. I am positive that it did happen". And with this he began to unravel his yarn.

It was a beautiful Saturday, Aug. 6, around the mobile home in which he lives with his wife and seven year old daughter. He went on to explain that he began strolling around and enjoying the beauty of the day. He mentioned stopping by Mrs. Jimmy Kolbie's place, a neighbour, and spent some time playing with the baby. His daughter Myra was with him around 10.30 a.m. He walked down to take a look at the fish pond which set behind some pines. He crossed over the pasture with his two dogs romping at his heels. Some 40 cows grazed lazily in the field.

Last Saturday morning was just like all the rest of the Saturdays he has strolled over this same place. Then it happened. He stepped inside the gate, and before he could close it behind him, the normal Saturday turned into a frightful, unforgettable nightmare. Like a flash from heaven, the strange circular shaped space ship set down in front of him, hovering two feet of the ground. He said that he was unable to move a muscle, as were the dogs and the cattle. Whatever position they were in when the ship landed, they froze that way.

Immediately after the ship stopped, the hatch opened and five strange looking humans marched out, two women and three men. Their skin was white as a flour sack, their noses were sharp and turned up, they had pointed ears and their heads were sitting right on the shoulders. One of the men and one of the women were completely nude. They were hairless. The first one out, which appeared to be the leader, stepped on the ground, tested it, and then motioned to the others to come on out. At this point, two more men came out of the hatch, and took their position at the entrance of the ship, appearing to be guards.

Mr. Dawson described their clothing as being very beautiful. Males and females dressed alike. The shoes seemed to be made of silk material, and the toes of the shoes pointed and turned up. Dawson said they approached him very cautiously, and began giving him what appeared to be a medical examination. A skullcap sort of thing was placed on his head. On this was attached several cords which were connected to a large ring, something like a hula hoop. On this hoop was a set of dials. They proceeded to remove his trousers and lift his shirt over his chest. As the examination was in progress, Mr. Dawson said that a loud voice came from the ship, "I am Jimmy Hoffa, I am Jimmy Hoffa, I am Jimmy Hoffa, I am....". A fourth try at shouting his name was cut off and the voice was not heard anymore.

The examination complete, they removed the cap and walked away about 10 feet and went into conference. They had high-pitched voices, very shrill, and at one time it seemed that one uttered something sounding like "Jupiter". Dawson said that the two males talked to each other and he had a feeling that they were discussing taking him with them. Then they returned to the ship, closed the hatch and took off. He said he got a glimpse of the ship when it was about 75 feet off the ground and then in a wink it was out of sight.

Dawson then said that he was free to move around and he noticed the animals also moving. He managed to secure his pants and then ran as hard as he could to Linda Kolbie's where he tried to relate his experience but was too excited to talk. He was rushed to the hospital where Dr. Braswell treated him for hysteria. Hospital attendants declare that he had not been taking any medication that might have caused hallucinations, there were no traces of alcohol. But something had given him a big scare.

When Mr. Dawson talked to the reporter he had calmed down some, but he hasn't completely recovered from his experience. When he completed his story, he ended it by repeating, "I'm not crazy. I wasn't drinking. I do not have a mental condition now nor have I ever had one in the past. I know what happened, and there is no doubt in my mind that it happened just as I told it".

Mr. Dawson's neighbour, Mrs. Jimmy Kolbie, was the first person to see Mr. Dawson Saturday morning, as he rushed from the scene of his terrifying experience to her home to tell his tale. She said that she was doing some work in the yard, and when he ran up to her, he could not say anything except gasp for breath. Linda Kolbie stated that he was in a bad shape. "I saw him coming. He was running at top speed and waving his arms, trying to get his breath". He was in such a state that Mrs. Kolbie forced him to sit down and got a wet rag for him to wipe his face. She said he was wild eyed. According to Mrs. Kolbie, it was obvious that something had frightened him something awful and she asked if he had seen a snake or something down at the pond. He tried to speak and managed to get the words out "space ship". Dawson had stopped by the Kolbie home earlier in the morning on his way to the pond and it was about 10.45 when he rushed to her home. She insisted that he go to the doctor, which he did.

The Kolbies know Tom Dawson real well. "He lives next to us and visits us frequently". They described him as hard working, nice, and a gentle man who adores his daughter. He will take a drink every now and then, but he is not a "boozer". They say he will tell stories with the best of them, but he is no liar. They say he is not prone to tell wild tales of the imagination.

Mrs. Kolbie describes him as a good neighbour and a good friend. The kind of neighbour one likes to have, one who is there to help when help is needed. Mrs. Kolbie says that she knows it happened to him. "Whether it happened in his mind or physically happened, it happened".

Ship Sights UFO (Hobart Mercury, 24/11/77): Lisbon - An unidentified flying object flew over a Portuguese fishing vessel for several minutes off the southern African coast on Nov. 15, it was learned here yesterday. The captain of the Paradelas, a 500 tonne refrigerated fishing vessel, said the UFO reflected an intense light on the ship for about 8 minutes. During this period the ship's alarm system started operating as if electric circuits and nautical instruments had broken down, the captain said.

UFOs On U.N. Agenda (Brisbane Courier-Mail, 30/11/77): New York (AAP - AP) - Amid diplomatically suppressed snickers and yawns, the United Nations for the first time formally took up yesterday the question of Unidentified Flying Objects. "The world is looking on", declared Sir Eric Gairy, Prime Minister of the tiny Caribbean island nation of Grenada, and prime mover behind a campaign to get the U.N. to study UFO phenomena worldwide. He said he had been encouraged by President Carter's interest in the subject. Mr. Carter, who, like Sir Eric, says he once saw a UFO, recently instructed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to resume a UFO study. American sources said the US would oppose creation of a new UN agency to study UFOs and would suggest instead that member nations report their findings to the UN General. Grenada has proposed a draft resolution by which the UN would declare 1978 UFO International Year.

(Adelaide News, 1/12/77): ...UN diplomats have made history with their first venture into interplanetary affairs. They plunged into outer space with the first UN debate on the mystery of UFOs. Then dozens left to make a closer study of the controversy. They went to see the film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", the movie which has set America talking again about the truth or nonsense of little green men.

The debate came at the insistence of Prime Minister Sir Edward Gairy, of the Caribbean island of Grenada. Sir Edward, a UFO fanatic who insists aliens regularly make visits to his island, tabled a solemn motion proposing that 1978 be declared the International Year of Unidentified Flying Objects. He also asked the UN and Grenada jointly issue postage stamps commemorating "great moments in UFO research".

Sir Edward put his motion before 149 members of the General Assembly's special political committee. Not a single diplomatic titter was evident, but in case Sir Edward's motion should not be taken seriously he emphasised: "Some may regard this topic as frivolous, but I am serious". Then the Prime Minister - his country measures 19 km by 32 km and is the world's biggest producer of nutmegs - listened with a look of approval as his ambassador, Mr. Wellington Friday, spoke to the committee. Mr. Friday said: "We see in the UFO a vast new hinterland with significance for all mankind. UFOs have been frightening experiences for thousands of people around the world. One must face the realities of life today and recognise the variety of things that baffle mankind".

(Melbourne Herald, 2/12/77): Grenada has withdrawn a resolution to set up a special UN agency or department for research into UFOs and related phenomena. Instead, it is circulating a draft resolution calling on Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to conduct a wide-ranging investigation into flying saucers, including an analysis of the benefits, problems and dangers stemming from any contact with extraterrestrial life. Mr. Wellington Friday, of Grenada, told the General Assembly's special political committee yesterday the important thing was that the question of UFO research had been raised for discussion and action in the UN. "For the nations of the world and for all mankind, this is really one giant step", he said. He urges delegates to prepare themselves "as earthlings, to face up to the exciting possibilities of interplanetary contact and communication which is the object of our resolution to investigate".

(Melbourne Sun, 8/12/77):The General Assembly's special political committee last night shelved a resolution calling for a full-scale study of UFOs.... The tiny Caribbean state was the only country to speak in the committee's debate on the subject. It had earlier unsuccessfully sought the establishment of a UN agency or department devoted entirely to UFOs.

The committee withheld action on Grenada's resolution but recommended the Assembly took note of speeches by Sir Eric and his Education Minister, Dr. Wellington Friday. Dr. Friday said that when delegations had become familiar with the available information "the world will not only be willing, but anxious to push investigation of this matter one step further".

(Brisbane Sunday Mail, 18/12/77):Sir Eric Gairy, respected Prime Minister of former British colony Grenada, told delegates from 149 nations that he had seen an unidentified flying object. "And I have been overwhelmed by what I have seen", he added awesomely. Sir Eric also revealed he had discussed the subject with President Jimmy Carter for 45 minutes during an earlier meeting in Washington....His action caused a considerable stir not only because he dared raise the unmentionable, but because it was the special political committee that was to do the debating....

UFO Research Has Intellect Puzzled (Cairns Post, 8/12/77) : St. Louis (AP) -- The pursuit of "flying saucers" can be a difficult thing for a scientist, especially if he becomes convinced he has found what he was looking for.

"It's changed my life completely", said Dr. Harley D. Rutledge, head of the physics department of Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, and a man, colleagues say, who is not prone to exaggerate. Rutledge began as a sceptic in 1973 when it was suggested that he investigate a rash of sightings of UFOs in south east Missouri. Now, after more than four years of first-hand research and observation, he has reluctantly admitted that he cannot debunk the stories. The information gathered by Rutledge, including more than 700 photographs, is a result of hundreds of nights spent in the air, in fields and on hillsides, accompanied, always, by other observers and equipment which includes telescopes, cameras and a spectrograph.

At 51, married, with 5 children, he is laying his reputation and career on the line and saying that there really is something up there that cannot be explained by conventional logic. "Now I know they are up there. What they are or where they come from, I have no way of knowing. But they are there", he said in a recent interview. Rutledge himself has made more than 140 sightings, both in broad daylight and at night. At least 25 of those sightings he labels as "incredible". Three of the most convincing sightings came within two weeks of each other in May of 1973.

The first, from the air, involved what he calls "a 45 second metamorphosis" involving 10 balls of light that had no business being where they were, in the air near the small town of Piedmont, Missouri. The second and third sightings, which he believes to be conclusive because he was so close to the objects, were made near Farmington, Missouri, about two weeks later.

On the night of May 24, Rutledge and several other observers spotted an object with a triangular shaped light pattern passing over them. Rutledge tentatively labelled the object as an airplane, but said that later evidence discounted that possibility. The next night, he said he and his colleagues observed a huge object that had nearly passed over them before they spotted it. "It had four lights, two red and two white", the professor said. "It was close enough that I could see parts of it through my 80-power telescope. It had a metallic skin and I could make out a ribbed pattern in the red lights".

Because of the delicacy of his position, Rutledge said he has been reluctant to talk about the phenomena. Now, he said, he believes he can survive the scoffing he will hear -- and he says he believes he has an obligation to tell the public what he knows.

Rutledge's colleagues point out that he is an intense man, but rational and conservative. "Anything he does has lots of effort put into it", said Dr. Donald Fromsdorf, dean of the College of Sciences at SEMO. "Everything is done professionally, scientifically. I have no qualms about his professional integrity or the way he goes about things. But he has taken on a monumental task".

Much of the work has been funded through grants from the university and a special grant from the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Jimmy's UFO Plan Grounded (Melbourne Herald, 28/12/77):

America's space agency has rejected a White House request to investigate flying saucers. But it will analyse any "bona fide physical evidence from credible sources". The White House request followed President Carter's campaign promise to reopen a government study of UFOs. The President himself reported a UFO sighting when he was governor of Georgia in 1973, and his science adviser, Dr. Frank Press, had asked the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish a small panel to investigate UFOs.

In the reply, released today, NASA administrator Robert Frosch said the request had been carefully considered, but added, "I do not feel that we could mount a research effort without a better starting point than we have been able to identify thus far".

Frosch said he did not mean to indicate that NASA had "come to any conclusion about these phenomena as such".

"Institutionally we retain an open mind, a keen sense of scientific curiosity....If some new element of hard evidence is brought to our attention in the future, it would be entirely appropriate for a NASA laboratory to analyse and report upon an otherwise unexplained organic or inorganic sample".

Carter's name has been linked with the new movie, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", in which government agencies go to extreme lengths to keep UFO research secret for fear of alarming the public. Publicity for the film quotes Carter's campaign admission: "I don't laugh at people any more when they say they have seen UFOs because I've seen one myself"....

Welsh Wails...Over "Cigar" UFOs (Melbourne Herald, 14/2/78):

Flying saucers are circling the mysterious "Welsh Triangle". And the latest sighting has excited investigators from the British UFO Research Association. After more than 50 positive sightings in the past few weeks in the triangle - formed by Swansea, mid-Wales and Broadhaven - they regard this one as the best yet. It was "experienced" by company directors Peter Bevan and Elvet Dyer as they drove between Carmarthen and Newcastle Emlyn on a bright morning.

"A huge cigar shaped machine at least 6 metres long crossed our path 100 metres ahead", Mr. Dyer said. "It was flying so low it would have taken the top off a double decker bus. It made no sound and we thought it was going to crash. We braced ourselves for an explosion as it passed out of sight into a field, but when we looked into the field there was nothing there at all".

The two men, non-believers in UFOs, were shaken and unnerved. Mr. Dyer said: "I have never seen any flying machine like it in my life. It had no wings, tailfins, cockpit or any protrusions. I do not know how it was flying at all".

Mr. Randall Pugh, regional investigator for BUFORA, said: "We know there is something very strange going on in this area. Many of the reports are from intelligent, educated people, who are not disposed to exaggerate or misconstrue what they have seen".

Cash Crisis May Block UFOs Probe (Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth, NSW, 15/2/78):

Private US UFO investigators have put in an urgent request for federal funds so they can continue their work. Unless the money is forthcoming, the investigators believe they will be unable to make any progress toward solving the UFO mystery before the year 2000. A spokesman for a leading private research group said: "A number of organisations have asked the Government for money. It is vital - without it we just go up and down".

A NASA spokesman said the organisations which had appealed to the Government were "very reputable, efficient private agencies". The request comes at a time when Americans' interest in UFOs is at an all-time high with the success of sci-fi movies like Close Encounters of the Third Kind. It has been confirmed that the Federal Government will not undertake any UFO research. A NASA spokesman said this week: "There is now no Government agency studying UFOs".

And private research organisations, doing the only investigative work in this country, say they are too short-staffed and too badly under-financed to make any headway in researching the UFO phenomenon. A one man coordinating office is being set up by NASA and will be the only link between the private researchers and the Government. The NASA spokesman said: "If some new element of hard evidence is brought to our attention in the future, we could be prepared to analyse and report on it. We also stand ready to respond to any bona fide physical evidence from a credible source".

John Acuff, president of the largest of the private research groups, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), said also that continued Government research and Government financial assistance to private researchers was essential. "We need both because we are dealing with phenomena we know exist, but which we can't explain", he said.

Acuff feels the official end of Government involvement with UFOs may be a blind, to let Government researchers work on UFO studies without the flood of mostly misleading public information.

REPORT ON UFOCON 3

by Les Bristol

The third annual conference organized by the Australian Co-ordination Section (ACOS) for the Centre for UFO Studies (CUFOS) was held at the Chevron Paradise Hotel, Surfers Paradise, Qld., november 12 - 14, 1977. The conference was attended by delegates from most of the Australian groups, and many individuals who contribute much to the study of unidentified flying objects.

The conference was open to outside observers, who at the end of each day were invited to submit questions on various points raised during the proceedings. The Media was well represented, and was attentive to a degree far surpassing previous conferences. This was indeed gratifying.

Many carefully researched papers were presented demonstrating that the research elements of the Australian societies and private researchers have the ability to come to grips with a difficult subject with a competence equal to any of their counterparts overseas.

Computerising the Australian UFO reports has proved to be a long and difficult task, but is now well advanced, thanks to the efforts of Bill Chalke and Michael Smythe, of UFO Research, N.S.W. This catalogue will become more and more an indispensable aid to the researcher.

A paper submitted by Fred Merritt, of the American Centre, showed an interesting correlation between triangular landing imprint patterns and craft exhibiting certain characteristics of flight and colour emanations. This is an excellent example of usage of computerised data.

A submission by Dr. G. T. Stevens, ACOS scientific consultant, indicates that hard radiation (nuclear) is not, as is commonly thought, a regular feature of UFO landing sites. It is considered more likely that heating effects due to electromagnetic radiation might be present. Such effects on soil can be detected at any time after the event, even years after, by a method known as thermoluminescence, a process that Dr. Stevens showed is invaluable in any analysis of soils, particularly in the case of suspected UFO activity.

An interesting talk was given on what is known as the hollow earth theory by Neil Huth of the Queensland group, where the results of his enquiry into the origin and perpetuation of this theme reveals that this story was seized upon by the German Nazi Party during the thirties and used to their advantage. Unfortunately, the story became entrenched in the literature throughout the world, and even now is offered as a possible answer to the UFO riddle.

A rundown on the 1954 Victorian situation was given by VUFORS secretary, Ray Fischer, where he demonstrated that 1954 was extremely active, and must certainly be included as a flap year. And yet until Mr. Fischer's painstaking research much of the information had gone unrecorded.

It has almost come to be expected of Queensland to produce yet another excellent publication. This time it was a carefully documented account of the "Jolly Nests", a series of circular markings occurring from early '66 through to '69, in which on at least one occasion an extraordinary flying object was seen taking off from a swamp at a point not more than 25 yards from the witness. An immediate inspection of the area showed the water and reeds still swirling.

The apparent absence of contact, time lapse, and abduction cases in Australian reports has long puzzled investigators, but during the conference a comparing of notes suggested that the more bizarre the case, the more reluctant witnesses are in coming forward. We do have such cases.

Roy Russell of the Queensland group pointed out that the tendency among some researchers in recent times has been to attribute UFO manifestations to a possible parapsychical cause, and in his paper argued that the most logical origin for UFO phenomena lies in physical beings from solid planets. However, his argument did not go unchallenged, and it would be correct to say that the majority of the participants were not prepared to come to any conclusions as to the origin and purpose of UFOs.

Keith Basterfield, of S.A., offered some good advice with regard to the caution with which researchers should approach UFO reports with respect to the accuracy of documentation, especially where the lines of communication are somewhat lengthy. He cited examples of newspaper reports, when compared with original interviews, being generally careless and prone to embellishment. This may be excusable for the media, perhaps, but unacceptable to the researcher.

Colin Phillips, of the Queensland group, put the case for both a "cover-up" and a "foul-up" by officialdom. He subscribes to the view that because of the official cover-up of hard physical evidence, this in turn led to the cultists taking over the subject, and turning reputable people off the subject for good.

As well as the presentation of papers, a number of discussion topics were dealt with, mainly concerned with improvements in the technical aspects of investigation and data-collection.

Once again, all participants agreed that this third conference, with its stimulating exchange of ideas, was a great success, and a fourth conference for 1978 was unanimously agreed upon. This will be held late in the year in Melbourne.

BOOK REVIEWS

"Our UFO Visitors", by John Magor - Hancock House Publishers.

Veteran Canadian UFO investigator, and editor of the journal, "Canadian UFO Report", John Magor, has put together a loosely-connected "travelogue" to relate the tales of his investigations through the Rocky Mountains and across Canada. The disadvantage of this style of writing is that the author jumps from one case study to the next, leaving the reader perplexed and at times frustrated for further information. For the uninitiated, Magor presents a wide variety of investigations, which he personally has undertaken, in an easily readable form.

His closing chapters contain a great deal of conjecture and speculation, and whilst the theories brought forth are interesting, they are merely that - interesting theories which have been expounded in greater detail elsewhere, and which do little to add to the furthering of the study of UFOs.

- Nada Richards.

"The Vortex Message", edited by Robert Kingsley Morison - published by "ASCENT", 34 Elm Grove, London, N8 9AH

First of all, I must thank the publisher for the review copy of the book, which he was kind enough to send us. Unfortunately, I cannot recommend it.

The book is poorly produced in almost every respect. The format is bad and the layout even worse; not to mention the proofreading. To illustrate the last point first, I should like to know where the continuation of page 69 disappeared to, for it certainly did not hide on page 70.

As for the first two points, Robert Morison tries to tie three books together to form an argument - the first of these being only the abridged version of the original, a proposition which is of very dubious value at the best of times, but in this case it only makes the disjointed nature of the book even more obvious.

The first error of constructive argument comes in the second paragraph on page 2 - of what is presumably an introduction by someone or other. (The book publisher does not evidently care to name the contributor concerned). The second paragraph, first sentence, says, "...it (the theory) prevents any possibility of a levitational monopoly..." A sweeping statement if ever I heard one.

However, the second last paragraph illustrates my point better than anything else: "The editor begins his own contribution - the levitational aspect - by briefly summarising the case for unexplained aerial marvels. By way of speculation he assumes that the majority of these are circular flying machines from other planets, then substantiates that assumption by suggesting how to defy gravity". You can only substantiate an assumption by the facts, not by theories. What is more, even presuming that the assumption is right, it does not follow that because they can defy gravity, they automatically must come from other planets.

The rest of this book follows much the same pattern, the most unfortunate detail of it being that its substance (which I will not presume to judge, because I am not qualified to do so) has become almost impossible to find, let alone digest, in the middle of all the defective points of the book.

So what use is the book if people, especially in this instance the people who matter - the scientists - have to wade through the book in order to find out whether it has any scientific merit? Seeing that the theories and propositions are unorthodox, I cannot see them even trying.

If the scientists won't, what hope for the common man?

- Michael McNamara.

LATE ITEMS

"Close Encounter Fever" (from the Australian, 6/3/1978):

....With only two weeks to go before Steven Spielberg's masterpiece Close Encounters of the Third Kind, hits London - it starts in Australia soon - Britain is being swamped with close encounter fever. Already the film has been sold out for the next three months and the press has been more than active in whipping up "close encounters" fever.

The Voice of Britain, The Daily Express, has been most active in this for the past two weeks. The paper has set up its own UFO bureau manned by a team of reporters whose sole job it is to investigate UFO reports. Last week, the paper was flooded with over 5000 letters and telephone calls from people all over the country wanting to report sightings of UFOs and even some close encounters of the third kind.

Like the Royal Air Force man who claimed aliens had tried to abduct him from his base in Wales. His story is backed up by 10 eye-witness accounts, and the air force is investigating. Then there was the British Caledonian Airways pilot who tracked and photographed a UFO over the Pyrenees on the French-Spanish border on a flight from Tangiers back to London during the week. His story is backed up by the first officer and the flight engineer....

....The staid Times even jumped on the close encounters bandwagon with reports of UFO sightings....

UFO Case in Court (from the Sydney Mirror, 8/3/1978):

A research organisation has sued the CIA, charging it is withholding proof of the existence of unidentified flying objects. Ground Saucer Watch, Inc., whose members include 40 scientists from major universities and aerospace firms, says it wants reports and photos involving UFOs. The Government wants the case dismissed on grounds that the New York court lacks jurisdiction.

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